



**TESTIMONY OF PENNI MICCA
SUBMITTED TO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Friday, March 4, 2011

H.B. No. 6380 AAC the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013.

Good evening Senator Prague, Representative Hamm, Representative Villano and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Penni Micca. As a representative of Interval House, Connecticut's largest domestic violence intervention and prevention program, and a member of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) Public Policy Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 6380: An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013.

I believe in Interval House and its sister programs across the state. I believe we provide quality services for victims of domestic violence. Interval House considers 24 hour on site staffing of our shelter and hotline an absolute necessity.

We deal with trauma every day and every night. When staff is present 24 / 7 we are better able to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence and the children they bring with them. The women that come through our doors have fled horrific situations. So often at night time they are overcome by loneliness, fear and the challenges they will face in the morning. Some are so overwhelmed they decide to bolt in the middle of the night. They come downstairs with their hastily packed bags and sometimes sleepy children in tow. It is the on-site counselor who calms

them, sits with them and quietly reviews all of the reasons they came to shelter, the consequences of returning home and the opportunities that lie ahead. Many women are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because their abusers have done terrible things to them and they know that when they close their eyes, the racing thoughts and nightmares will begin again. They remember their abuser's words. They remember their threats. It is the on-site counselor that offers support and comfort and helps them get through the evening. When not assisting residents, that same counselor is often fielding questions from women in the community. Many late night calls come in from police officers who are calling from their personal cell phones to seek guidance and encourage victims to speak to the hotline worker as well. In all situations safety planning is discussed. If officers needed to wait for an answering service to contact an on call advocate, far fewer calls would be made.

Our programs are a fantastic resource for victims and are well utilized. In the past year, Interval House served more than 6,000 individuals. We sheltered 350 women and children in our 10 bedroom residence. We are there for telephone support twenty four hours a day. Advocates are available for both criminal and civil court advocacy. We have a wonderful children's program, offer an array of support groups in both English and Spanish, a busy development and community education program, and a growing Men Make a Difference - Men Against Domestic Violence Program. Our services are offered to twenty four communities from three Interval House sites as well as my program, the Domestic Violence Outreach Team stationed at the Manchester Police Department. We have advocates in Hartford GA14 and Manchester GA 12 and are a presence in both Hartford and Rockville civil courts. Interval House has provided services to more than 166,000 individuals since its inception in 1977. Each of the eighteen

domestic violence programs in Connecticut provides similar services to victims of domestic violence throughout the State.

Please help us to advocate for the thousands of adults and children affected by domestic violence by supporting the Governor's recommendations for funding for domestic violence emergency shelters throughout Connecticut. By helping us to retain our funding, you are supporting the foundation that works to improve the lives of victims.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you.

